

POLITICS FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS: A Comparative Introduction

Richard Eccleston
Robyn Hollander
Elizabeth Van Acker
Paul Williams

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Richard Eccleston is a Senior Lecturer in The School of Government at the University of Tasmania. He has written 25 articles and chapters and has written or edited 4 books on various aspects of economic policy and business politics. He is an editor of The Australian Journal of Public Administration and is the Secretary of the International Political Science Association's Business and Politics Research Committee. His current research focuses on the role of international institutions in international tax regulation.

Dr Robyn Hollander is Head of the Department of Politics and Public Policy at Griffith University. She has published numerous articles and chapters on the role of the media in Australian politics, environmental and business regulation and on federalism. Like Richard, Liz and Paul she has had a long involvement in teaching *Government-Business Relations*.

Dr Elizabeth van Acker is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics and Public Policy at Griffith University. She has written or edited 5 books as well as numerous articles on social and industry policy, the role of gender in politics as well as politics and the media. Her most recent book is *Governments and Marriage Education Policy* (Palgrave MacMillan 2008).

Dr Paul Williams is a Lecturer in the Media and Communication program in the School of Arts at Griffith University. He has published widely on Australian and Queensland politics and is an editor of *Yes Premier*, a recently published book on the political leadership in the Australian States. He is also well known in Queensland for his media commentary on political parties and elections and is a senior writer for the *Courier Mail*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2006 we published *Foundations of Australian Politics* in response to the need for a clear and concise introduction to the Australian political system which would be suitable for business students. While *Foundations of Australian Politics* exceeded our expectations, our students suggested that we provide more comparative analysis and perspectives in the second edition of the text. *Politics for Business Students* aims to provide this perspective by outlining the central features of the Australian political system before comparing the Australian practice of democracy with that of other advanced economies. Having provided this comparative analysis each of the chapters assesses the implications of different political systems for business.

We would like to thank both our students and colleagues at Griffith University and the University of Tasmania for their feedback and support. We have been greatly assisted by research assistance from Ross Ploetz, Claire Eccleston and Rhys Stubbs.

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Richard Eccleston
Robyn Hollander
Elizabeth van Acker
Paul Williams

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PREFACE

POLITICS FOR BUSINESS STUDENTS

The global financial crisis of 2008 clearly demonstrates the important links between politics and business. With the collapse of communism and the rise of globalisation, some experts argued that the ideological debates around the role of government and approaches to economic management had been resolved. However, as the financial crisis has demonstrated, politics remains important and as pervasive as ever.

Business has to deal with new and increasingly complex regulations concerning competition laws, taxation, consumer and environmental protection to name but a few issues. While it is true that governments in Australia and around the world have largely reduced their direct role both in the economy and in the provision of public services, the companies and other organisations which have assumed these roles operate in highly regulated and politically sensitive markets. Finally, debates concerning economic policy and business regulation have become much more politicised with stakeholders, be they business or community groups, increasingly being forced to defend and justify their political interests. As a consequence of these political challenges business managers, particularly at higher levels, need to develop a detailed understanding of the political environment in which they operate and the power, processes and priorities of government.

Given the inherently political nature of business management, increasing numbers of business students are studying politics and government-business relations as part of their broader degree programs. *Politics for Business Students* has been written with such students in mind. It offers a clear and concise explanation of the central ideas, institutions and actors which constitute the Australian political system and then compares the Australian practice of democracy with that of other advanced economies. The aim here is to provide students with the necessary tools and knowledge to study and analyse many of the political issues confronting business in Australian and abroad.

The book is not designed as an alternative to the many excellent undergraduate Australian politics texts on which it draws. Indeed it deliberately seeks to describe the key features of Australia's political system in simplified, practical terms without offering the detail and theoretical perspectives associated with more specialised texts. While there are inevitably risks and compromises when presenting simplified accounts of complex and contested issues, our goal is to provide foundational knowledge on which students can build during their subsequent studies and professional careers. It is specifically written for undergraduate

business or senior college students and is designed as a companion volume for either *Globalising Government Business Relation* (Curran and van Acker 2007, Pearson Education) or *Regulating International Business* (Carroll and Eccleston 2008, Pearson Education).

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Politics for Business Students offers a clear and concise account of how political institutions and practices in both Australia and abroad influence business in the 21st century.

The book provides an overview of the substantive features of the Australian political system before comparing Australian practice with that of other advanced economies. The emphasis is on assessing the implications of political systems on business and society more generally. The comparative analysis presented in the book highlights distinctive features of the Australian political system as well as providing insights into political systems and issues on the international scene.

The book is aimed at university or college business students and will provide them with the necessary tools and knowledge to study and analyse many of the political issues confronting business in Australian and abroad.